

IPAS 2013-14 Priorities (proposed for comment)

Abuse and Neglect — Freedom from abuse and neglect is a fundamental right. One of the primary purposes of IPAS is to work toward the elimination of abuse and neglect of individuals with disabilities.

Following are proposed objectives toward which IPAS staff will work toward to reduce abuse and neglect of individuals with disabilities during FY 2014:

Review allegations of abuse and neglect on behalf of individuals with disabilities to ensure that the allegation is reported to the responsible entities and advocate for necessary action to protect the health, safety and welfare of the individual.

Review allegations of abuse or neglect of individuals residing in a facility operated by Indiana Department of Mental Health and Addiction and advocate that necessary actions are taken to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the individual.

Review allegations of abuse and neglect of individuals residing in Community Mental Health Centers and advocate that necessary actions are taken to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the individual.

Review allegations of abuse or neglect that resulted in the death of an individual who resided in a mental health treatment facility.

Review allegations of inappropriate use of restraint or seclusion and advocate that necessary actions are taken to protect the health, safety, and welfare of the individual.

Review allegations of abuse or neglect of individuals residing in facilities designated as a psychiatric residential treatment facility (PRTF).

Review allegations of treatment rights violations of individuals with mental illness.

Review allegations of unregulated or under regulated use of restraint and/or seclusion by schools and advocate for adoption of policies that promote the health and safety of students.

Conduct financial review and interviews of SSDI and/or SSI beneficiaries whose benefits are being managed by a Representative Payee for the purpose of ensuring that their living conditions are safe (when the Representative Payee is also providing housing) and that their needs are being met.

Equal Access and Other rights — Individuals with disabilities must have access to programs, services, technology, polling places, buildings and housing.

Following are objectives toward which IPAS staff will work on to increase access for individuals with disabilities during FY 2014:

Promote, preserve and maximize the rights of individuals with disabilities as the Affordable Care Act is implemented in Indiana.

Assist individuals with disabilities in obtaining assistive technology services and devices in the areas of education, health care, employment, community living and in the use of telecommunications.

Represent individuals in their appeal of reduced Medicaid waiver services when the alleged reduction in services will have a serious and negative impact on the health and safety of the individual, or when the reduction of services places the individual at risk of being placed in a more restrictive setting.

Review allegations of discrimination under the Americans with Disabilities Act, Fair Housing Act, or other disability discrimination law.

Assist or represent individuals with disabilities in the grievance procedure set forth in the Indiana HAVA plan.

Respond to requests from governmental entities regarding the physical accessibility of polling places.

Strengthen policies and practices affecting the State's response to disability rights issues affecting individuals with developmental disabilities through attending at least 50% of the meetings of select committees, groups and task forces.

Continue to represent prisoners with serious mental illness in class action lawsuit to diminish the use of segregation.

Review allegations on behalf of individuals residing in state operated facilities when there is proposed or instituted restriction of a conditional right. Or – Review allegations of actual or proposed violations of the federal patient's bill of rights.

Participate on the Resident/Human Rights Committee meetings of the facilities operated by the Indiana Department of Mental Health and Addictions.

Participate on selected committees, groups or task forces that have systemic implications concerning policies and practices affecting the rights of individuals with disabilities..

Review allegations of disability based discrimination that may have systemic implications.

Review cases involving alleged rights violations and the use of the internal complaint process of the provider, in situations not involving abuse or neglect.

Represent individuals in their appeal of denied eligibility for Medicaid waiver services.

Special Education — Due to increased emphasis on school discipline, students with disabilities are at increased risk of termination or reduction of their educational services. Students, parents and advocates need information and support to enable them to effectively self advocate. There are also school systems that exhibit ongoing violations of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act and Article 7.

Following are objectives toward which IPAS staff will work to help special education students that receive a free and appropriate public education:

Review allegations on behalf of students where the school has proposed or instituted a change of placement through suspension or expulsion.

Review allegations on behalf of students where the school is not providing appropriate educational services.

Develop and disseminate transition materials to all transition aged students, aged 14 years through 22 years, in three Indiana school districts.

Employment— Historically, individuals with disabilities have experienced a higher rate of unemployment or underemployment, which represents a significant barrier to achieving the level of independence and productivity that many people with disabilities wish to attain.

Following are objectives toward which IPAS staff will work to increase the opportunity for individuals with disabilities to attain full employment during FY 2014:

Review complaints on behalf of individuals seeking employment services regarding VRS or CIL eligibility determination.

Review complaints regarding failure of VRS and CIL in providing choice to individuals seeking services under these programs.

Review the quality and completeness of Individual Plan for Employment documents developed by VRS as they relate to the individual's identified vocational services and supports as well as choice(s).

Review the quality and completeness of Plan of Services documents developed by the CILs as they relate to the individual's identified services and supports as well as choice(s).

Participate on selected committees, groups or task forces that have systemic implications concerning policies and practices to assure compliance with the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 as amended.

Respond to requests for information and referral and technical assistance to individuals with disabilities, their families, and professionals about regarding VRS or CIL.

Review complaints of improper or inadequate services provided to a beneficiary by a service provider, employer or other entity involved in the beneficiary's return to work effort.

Education and Training — Students, parents and advocates need information and support to enable them to effectively self advocate.

Following are objectives toward which IPAS staff will work to increase awareness about disabilities rights and the exercise of those rights during FY 2014.

Provide education and training about disability rights, self-advocacy skills and IPAS to individuals with disabilities, parents, guardians, families, advocates, and/or service program providers.

Develop and disseminate information regarding disability rights.

Support education and training efforts of self advocacy/consumer -based organizations to increase awareness of disability rights.

Assist the Brain Injury Association of Indiana (BIAI) in planning and sponsoring of the Annual BIAI Conference

Conduct training events concerning the civil and disability rights of individuals with mental illness for family members.

Conduct resident rights training events for consumers at selected Comprehensive Mental Health Centers.

Support the creation of a Crisis Intervention Team program in an Indiana Law Enforcement entity.

Develop and distribute information concerning voter registration, access to polling places and the right to cast a vote, including information regarding the state's grievance procedure and the role of IPAS in representing individuals.

Provide in-service training to IPAS staff regarding voting issues, including education regarding accessible voting equipment and systems.

Respond to education, training and assistance requests to individuals with disabilities that will promote their participation in the electoral process.

Respond to request for information or training material regarding Help America Vote Act.

Respond to requests by election officials, poll workers, and election volunteers regarding the rights of voters with disabilities and best practices in working with individuals with disabilities

Information and Referral — The IPAS Commission continues to support the efforts of the staff to provide timely and accurate information about disability rights for individuals with disabilities, their families, as well as advocates, and members of the public.

Respond to requests for information and referral and technical assistance to individuals with disabilities, their families, and professionals about disability rights and provide information and technical assistance concerning the exercise of these rights.

Administration — IPAS strives to provide high quality advocacy services that are responsive to the needs of individuals with disabilities and their families. IPAS continues to ask our clients about their experiences with IPAS to help us identify how we can improve our services.

Following are objectives IPAS staff will work toward to increase awareness of IPAS and the advocacy services that are provided during FY 2014.

Assure the provision of high quality advocacy services, via client satisfaction surveys.

Outreach to the public and to individuals with disabilities, concerning disability rights issues, IPAS Services, and successes.

Continue development of web-based resources to empower individuals and families.

Outreach to minority and underserved individuals with disabilities, concerning disability rights issues, IPAS services and successes.

Provide the public with opportunities to make comments and suggestions concerning agency priorities and objectives.

Maintain a pool of qualified and diverse individuals who are eligible for appointment to the Commission and its Mental Illness Advisory Council.

Publish and disseminate an annual IMPACT and invite readers to submit comments.

Gather input as to critical disability rights barriers.